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'Emotional Blood on the Undusted Carpets':¹ The Citizen as Subject in *Wife Swap*

JAMES WALTERS

'Man will become better only when you will make him see what he is like.'

– Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

'Do people really live like this?'

– Nigel, *Wife Swap* participant

This paper aims to examine the ways in which *Wife Swap* uses the citizen as its central focus. More generally, I seek to situate the programme within the context of RDF Media's output, the Reality television genre and the Swap format on British television, before providing a more sustained analysis of the programme's themes and conventions as they relate to the role of the citizen as subject.

***Wife Swap*, RDF Media and Reality Television**

Wife Swap, made for Channel 4 by RDF Media, began in January 2003 and has so far reached its fourth series, with a further fifth series already planned. The relatively rapid spawning of new series is indicative of *Wife Swap*'s popularity: the programme has become one of Channel 4's undisputed successes, attracting audiences in excess of 6 million viewers.² The basic premise of the programme involves two wives swapping households for two weeks and living with each other's family. During the first week, each wife must abide by the household's rules, as outlined in a household manual that they each receive, but in the second week they are free to implement any changes they feel necessary upon the running of the household. At the end of the two weeks, the two wives are reunited with their husbands and the couples are invited to share their experiences with one another. In the words of one admiring critic, the format is 'one of those blindingly simple ideas that makes television executives thump their heads on their desks and wail "Why didn't I think of that?"'

(Turpin, 4). Certainly, the format would appear strong enough to survive occasional adaptations and reincarnations. There has been a celebrity version; an episode in which husbands were swapped instead of wives (the above quotation from Nigel occurs within this episode) and the fourth series has seen couples swapped from Britain to countries such as Australia and Germany.

The programme also has equivalents in America and Germany, which is consistent with RDF Media's practice of marketing formats transnationally. For example, another of RDF's programmes *Faking It* (RDF Media for Channel 4, 2000–), in which a member of the public has a month to master a new skill and then convince a panel of judges that they are an expert in it, has also transferred successfully to the United States. *Faking It* has enjoyed similar success to *Wife Swap* among British audiences, with five series already completed and further episodes already planned.³ RDF bracket both *Faking It* and *Wife Swap* within their 'Reality' output, along with a number of their other programmes. The category of Reality television exists alongside several other categories of programme: Drama, Entertainment, Features, Documentaries, History, and Science. Reality television is therefore awarded an equal status beside other brands of programming that might be classed as more traditionally established. It is feasible that, in the context of their own marketing material, RDF would be keen to emphasise the stature of Reality television, as it constitutes a significant part of their output, and thus represents an area of strength that the company is keen to promote. As Dolan Cummings makes clear, 'Everybody who works in television knows that programme ideas with a "reality" component are more likely to be commissioned than more conventional ones'.⁴ Certainly, if we take Cummings' assertion to be accurate, it would seem useful for RDF to advertise its propensity for reality television production. Yet, Cummings' concept of 'a reality component' does not quite match the manner in which Reality television is represented and termed by RDF. RDF is not merely classifying Reality as an element that can be incorporated into programmes which themselves belong to distinct genres. Instead, they would appear to regard Reality programming as a genre in its own right, established to the extent that it can sit happily alongside the more traditional genres of programming.

Identifying those equivalent genres as more traditional might implicitly define Reality television as a contemporary development. Yet, caution is also required here. Su Holmes reminds us that: 'It is not, of

course, new for ordinary people to appear on television. Genres as diverse as news, quiz shows and documentaries have long since relied upon the role and presence of “real” people as opposed to media professionals and performers’.⁵ Christopher Dunkley in fact goes a step further than this by constructing an argument against the notion of reality television being ‘something quite new to television’ at all. Instead, Dunkley makes a case for the observable repetition of formats and concepts across the much wider history of television. *Castaway 2000* is thus seen to bear a striking similarity to a BBC series 22 years previous entitled *Living in the Past*. Likewise, *Popstars* is seen to replicate not only the TV birth of *The Monkees* in America but also British talent shows such as *Opportunity Knocks* and *New Faces*.⁶ The particular terms of this argument might be contested, but the general insistence that television programmes inform television programmes across formats, generations, nations, etc., cannot easily be discounted. But if reality is not exactly new to television, being termed as and talked about as ‘Reality television’ is a relatively new event. When Bernard Clark describes Reality television as ‘a new phenomenon, indeed, a new concept’, he is not suggesting that there was no equivalent on television until recently but rather that, for whatever reason, it was rarely termed in this way.⁷ Yet, the use of the term ‘Reality television’ is prevalent now, to the extent that analysis has begun into what exactly the term might denote, so that Holmes and Jermyn can begin their introduction to an edited collection on the subject with that very question: ‘what is “Reality TV?”’ (2). RDF’s inclusion of its Reality television output alongside more established genres would seem to acknowledge the prevalence of the term and the extent to which it has become a legitimate way of describing an area, or genre, of television. The implication is that the genre of Reality television enjoys a significance and influence comparable to that of more traditional genres such as Drama, Entertainment, Features, Documentaries, History and Science. RDF’s usage of the term also illustrates the degree to which the industry and, crucially, audiences understand the word ‘Reality’ to denote a particular kind of television product, a particular kind of experience.

The Swap Format on British Television

Within RDF’s own Reality genre bracket, the theme of the ‘swap’ would appear to have informed much of the company’s output and can

be recognised as a key constituent feature in many of their successful shows. Clearly, *Wife Swap* itself relies upon this central conceit, but *Faking It* also involves a member of the public temporarily swapping their way of life for an alternative lifestyle, a theme that is revisited in *I Hate My Job* (for Spike TV, 2004–) which follows three men who swap their careers for the pursuit of their dreams; *Going Native* (for Channel 4, 2001) involved a family swapping their life in Britain for ten weeks spent in the African bush; *Masters and Servants* (for Channel 4, 2003) saw one family acting as another family's servants for one week before swapping roles for a following week; *Boss Swap* (for Channel 4, 2004–) closely resembles the format of *Wife Swap* but involves two bosses swapping companies; and *Holiday Showdown* (for ITV1, 2003–) features two families swapping their favourite holiday destinations with each other, with the added clause that they must experience each destination in each other's company. This list illustrates the extent to which RDF has utilised the 'swap' in its Reality television output, defining it as a popular, and thus successful, theme. Importantly, if 'Reality' is an acknowledged television genre for RDF Media, then the abundant use of the 'swap' within that genre might constitute what could usefully be described as the Swap format.

Of course, it is necessary here to avoid viewing any genre or format as entirely discrete. Just as aspects of Reality television can be found in the genres of television Holmes picks out (namely news, quiz shows and documentaries), so aspects of the Swap format can be found across Reality television. For example, *I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here* (Granada for ITV1, 2002–) essentially involves a group of celebrities swapping their 'pampered' lifestyles for days spent in the Australian Bush, thus relating thematically to the Swap format. Yet, the inclusion of features such as the celebrities themselves, a final prize (of being crowned King or Queen of the Jungle), phone voting and celebrity presenters, distinguish it from the majority of Swap programmes that contain none of those features and mark that programme's equal, if not greater, affinity with the game show format.⁸ In thinking about its potential to transcend styles of programming, we might liken the Swap format to the Makeover format, as described by Rachel Moseley.⁹ Moseley contends that the Makeover format has expanded from the 'confines of women's programming to span both daytime and primetime scheduling' (301) and examples can certainly be found in abundance across many programmes dealing in various topics, from shows that make people over

(*Style Challenge*, BBC, 1996–2001) to shows that make food over (*Ready Steady Cook*, BBC, 1994–), as well as shows that make over gardens (*Ground Force*, BBC, 1997–) and homes (*Changing Rooms*, BBC, 1996–). It is useful to consider the extent to which this Makeover format is still expanding and, particularly, whether recent programmes such as *Too Posh To Wash* (Channel 4, 2004–), which features experts seeking to improve an individual's personal hygiene or *The Sex Inspectors* (Channel 4, 2004–), which features experts seeking to improve a couple's sex life, are simply more extreme incarnations of the format that Moseley describes, 'making over' personal hygiene and sexual behaviour, respectively.

Although less established than the Makeover format on British television, the Swap format is also becoming commonplace within Reality television. As well as RDF Media's output for Channel 4 and ITV1, shows such as *Take My Mother in Law* (Channel 21 for ITV1, 2003–), in which two husbands swap mother-in-laws, *Family Xchange* (LWT for BBC1, 2003–), in which two families literally swap lifestyles for a week, and one-off programmes such as *Young Posh and Penniless* (Carlton for ITV1, 2004), in which three moneyed teenagers spend a fortnight living and working at the other end of the social scale, all feature the swap as a key thematic device. All give weight to the notion of a discernible Swap format existing on British television.

'The Rise of Ordinary People'¹⁰

The Makeover and Swap formats differ most noticeably in terms of the individuals they present as their subjects. Clearly, a correlation occurs as both formats involve members of the public either to be made over or to swap lifestyles. Yet, most regularly, the Makeover format also features an individual or group in possession of certain expertise that ensure the success of the makeover. This individual or group is set apart due to their expertise and frequently, if the series becomes successful, their celebrity status. Often, these figures enjoy especially direct relationships with the audience, either through address to camera or in voiceover narration. This produces the convention of expert-as-presenter, which is itself a departure from 'the three-way exchange' between expert, presenter and participant that Moseley identifies in many earlier Makeover shows (306). We can

recognise these experts-as-presenters and their particular expertise across different incarnations of the Makeover format: Alan, Charlie and Tommy's gardening skills (*Ground Force*), Trinny and Susannah's fashion skills in *What Not to Wear* (BBC2, 1999–) or Kim and Aggie's cleaning skills in *How Clean is Your House?* (Channel 4, 2002–). It would be interesting to investigate further the extent to which the particular brand of 'experts' involved in the Makeover shows themselves display a kind of ordinariness – what the exact nature of this might be, and the extent to which the distance between expert and citizen has become narrower as the two are made to meet, more often than not, within the domestic sphere. As more and more shows are presented by former gardeners, cleaners, estate agents, chefs, etc., there is now a breed of 'everyday' expert on British television, chosen from a recognisably public sphere (as opposed to the generally distanced worlds of medicine, academia, journalism, show-business etc. from which panels of experts are often traditionally drawn) and welcomed into homes. This move might be symptomatic of a general trend that Gareth Palmer alludes to when he observes that: 'The decline of experts and the rise of ordinary people have meant that new user-friendly forms of television have risen in prominence and importance' (174). The Swap format seems to exemplify this shift even more so than the Makeover format, as this group of programmes dispenses entirely with the notion of an expert who might play an active role in the show's narrative, helping to meet the needs of the citizen or in fact identifying in more precise terms what those needs might be.

Contrastingly, in the Makeover show, responsibility for the transformation rests with the everyday expert, particularly in more recent instances where the subject is unaware of their needs – to dress better, to be cleaner, to be fitter – and especially when family and friends have 'nominated' the individual to be made over. The ability of the everyday experts to transform their subject becomes the show's narrative focus; their achieving the transformation becomes the climactic moment. When thinking in Todorov's terms, where the aim of a narrative 'is to solve a riddle, to find an answer to an enigma, to fill a lack',¹¹ we might contend that in the Makeover show it is the everyday expert who becomes the central protagonist, solving the problem, rather than the member of the public. In many Makeover shows, the participant's passivity in the transformation process is exemplified during the climactic 'reveal' moment, where they are shown for the first time their new look/garden/room/weight, etc. This highly con-

ventional moment emphasises the extent to which narrative agency has resided with the everyday expert and the degree to which the participant's control over events – in this instance the transformation process – has become diminished.

The Swap format does not incorporate a presenter, and even when an expert is featured, as in *Faking It*, their status in the narrative is very much equal to that of the participant as they each enjoy corresponding opportunities to express themselves to each other and to the camera. Significantly, although the expert has to try and teach the participant a new skill in this show, successful completion is not given the same importance as transformation is in the Makeover shows, and both expert and participant are given equal status as they share responsibility for success. Whereas no presenter appears on screen, voiceover narration is a common feature of the Swap format, initially to provide background story but primarily to help shape events into a coherent narrative. This convention is reminiscent of 'docu-soaps' such as *Airport* (BBC1, 1996–2002) or *Vets in Practice* (BBC1, 1996–2001), and perhaps a similar attempt is being made here to portray the Swap show's events as equally spontaneous and non-contrived. Although voiceover narration in the Swap format is hardly passive in terms of shaping audience knowledge and expectation, it can never achieve the kind of active intervention and influence that the experts-as-presenters exhibit in Makeover shows. Even though the narration is often delivered in the present tense, there is no concealing that it has been added after the events it describes to us. The voice that we hear is both spatially and temporally detached from the events depicted on screen.

A House of Mirrors

Wife Swap exploits the detached nature of the voiceover to distinguish between the delivery of fact and opinion, creating divergent modes of address. The voiceover is most prevalent at the beginning of the show as the two families are introduced. During this section, the voiceover interjects between the respective family members as they talk directly to camera about their lifestyles (and also overlays images of the families as they go about their daily lives). Within this alternating relationship, a clear divide is established between the role of the voiceover and the role of the families, with the former providing

facts and the latter, generally, providing opinions. Distance and intimacy are used here to create two different modes of address: the voiceover functions informatively whereas the family members' speech functions emotively. As well as establishing an early and crucial link between the families and the audience through candid direct address, this format privileges the citizen exclusively as the dramatic subject of the programme, the source of spontaneous thought and emotion. The voiceover, initially a framing device, becomes marginalised in this relationship as it functions mainly to provide background, incidental information. This marks a departure from the Makeover format, for example, which relies as much upon the candid opinions of the everyday experts as it does upon the participants' thoughts and feelings.

Clearly, the family members are prioritised visually over the unseen narrating voice. In fact, the participants are defined as much by the way they are presented to us as by the opinions they share with us. In one particular episode where two wives, Nicola and Jayne, swap between two brothers, Jason and Dave, each individual is shown in a particular environment performing particular tasks that encapsulate their personalities and roles as they emerge during the episode.¹² So Nicola, who later questions her own materialism and disproportionately large domestic responsibilities, is seen showing off the opulence of her home and performing household chores; Jason's detachment from his family will later become an issue and he is first shown locked away in his games room, drinking and smoking alone. Jayne and Dave's devotion to their family is a central theme in the episode and so they are shown immediately together with their children, playing a game, but Dave also performs a disproportionately large share of the domestic tasks, so he is shown actively preparing meals, washing clothes, taking the children upstairs, helping them brush their teeth etc., whereas Jayne is almost exclusively shown sitting down, inactive. These early visual clues are instructive as we build up a knowledge and understanding of the citizens so that, when the swap begins, we can read their behaviour, feeling we know and understand them. A narrative is already unfolding as we make early judgements about what kind of citizens these people are, based upon their spoken thoughts, their visual presentation to us and the informative voiceover narration. In this episode, the balance between family values and materialism provides a further narrative thread as the two family's financial circumstances are contrasted. This contrast occurs in the

voiceover narration as well as during the two couples' discussions of their differing attitudes towards money, but also visually. For example, at one point the camera lingers on the extravagantly decorated ornaments and chandeliers in Nicola and Jason's home before cross-fading to pegged washing blowing on a line in a cramped backyard at Dave and Jayne's home. A further visual comparison is also made between Nicola and Jason's son sitting alone on a large sofa talking about his father's self-imposed solitude in the games room and Dave and Jayne sitting around a table with their children, playing bingo. Already the families are distinguished according to their personal values, and a contrast is established with money on one side and family on the other.

As viewers, we are invited to make an initial comparison of the two families, judging them according to the values they display. Importantly, and consistently in *Wife Swap*, citizens are valued according to their performance in the domestic sphere. The home forms the central location almost exclusively in the show, with the professional world outside remaining largely unseen, visited only occasionally, if at all, and afforded far less attention than the home environment. This has repercussions for the way Jason, particularly, is portrayed in this episode. The shift in focus towards the domestic sphere serves to highlight his failings as a father and husband, yet this failure is not balanced with any sustained interest in his apparent professional success. In *Wife Swap*, being a successful citizen relies upon being successful within the home. This is consistent with the show's dramatic drive, based around the Household Manual, where wives are expected to contend with one another's domestic schedule of cleaning, cooking, looking after children etc. More generally, the show's domestic shift would seem to replicate the position of the viewer at home, mirroring their viewing environment and encouraging the formulation of judgements based upon domestic standards and behaviour. Audience responses to the show posted on Internet chat-rooms illustrate the extent to which this mirroring actively takes place, with one female respondent stating: 'I have to say after watching "it" my dh [darling husband] and I both jumped up and he did the dishwasher and I sorted out the washing followed by getting the stuff ready for 8.50 dash in the morning ... I look forward to next weeks [sic]!' ¹³ In this case, watching others under-perform domestically provided the catalyst for the viewer to actively re-engage with their own domestic routine. *Wife Swap*'s consistent favouring of the domestic

sphere regularly results in what Moseley has termed the 'making of a public spectacle from a private moment' (307). Yet, this public spectacle is received within the viewer's private space, their home mirroring the home depicted onscreen. This may give rise to the kind of close relationship the viewer quoted above experienced to the show's events and, equally, the mirroring of domestic spheres gives rise to inevitable comparison. For example, another female viewer in the same Internet chat-room responded to Jason, as featured in the episode quoted earlier, by saying: 'Crap Dad reminded me of my husband. Right down to the spending all the time playing computer games and complaining that he gets no spare time. Although at least mine does make an effort to go out with us sometimes (if I force him too).' For this viewer, the programme offers the opportunity to measure themselves against the couples involved, resulting in a comparison that provides both negative and positive elements.

In the Nicola/Jayne episode's opening section, information is conveyed through a series of audiovisual layers: the distanced voiceover, the families' direct speech and the patterning of images through editing.¹⁴ It could certainly be argued that footage of the families has been manipulated in order to achieve a certain narrative effect. Thus, a degree of manipulation has taken place as sound and images are choreographed together. Yet, the narrative is also controlled extensively by the thoughts and actions of the participants themselves. They are responsible for the raw material in this opening section, and their lifestyle choices guide the episode's ensuing narrative. It is no coincidence that a low-earning family-minded couple have been paired with a high-earning, somewhat dysfunctional couple (even less that the two husbands chosen are brothers) but that contrivance should not detract from the reality that is being presented. The situation of the swap is certainly manufactured, but it is the attitudes and behaviours of the participants that shape events. Likewise, the manufactured form of the finished episode undoubtedly places greater dramatic emphasis upon events, but that does not alter the fact that those events occurred for real.

Up Close and Personal

The nature of the citizen's control over events in a programme such as *Wife Swap* is therefore complicated. At times, it is made more difficult

as efforts are made to suggest that they have more influence over matters than is strictly true. For example, each episode of *Wife Swap* contains 'Diary Cam' moments where individuals speak their thoughts directly to camera. On the face of it, this might constitute the participant occupying a role previously taken by the presenter/expert: reflecting on events and relaying their thoughts directly to the audience, enjoying a particularly immediate connection to the viewer. Yet, watching the 'Special Wife Swap Extra' section of a DVD compilation produced by Channel 4, it becomes apparent that these Diary Cam sections are often instigated by the show's director, and that the individual is frequently responding to direct questions which are then edited out in the final treatment so that only the participant's voice remains. Implicitly, the moment is not so much instigated by the participant's desires as through invitation by the production team. A number of critics have maintained that this kind of process undermines any programme's claim to present 'reality' and, in more extreme cases, that nothing appearing on television can legitimately be described as 'real'. Bernard Clark's assertion that the words 'reality' and 'television' are 'mutually exclusive' would constitute a succinct articulation of this position (6). Yet, despite the prompting of the participants and post-production editing, it could still be maintained that a type of reality is in evidence here. During the Diary Cam moments, the individuals give spontaneous, unrehearsed accounts of their thoughts and feelings in reaction to a situation that is a continuous reality to them. Although, as retrospective viewers, we can recognise the extent to which the social situation has been manufactured, an awareness of this artificiality does not seem to inform the responses of the individuals involved. Often in *Wife Swap* the participants display a rawness of emotion precisely because the show effectively calls into question their real lives through the convention of the swap. It is reality to them; their awareness of the swap's impermanence becomes suspended as the situation exerts a tangible emotional impact upon them and their lives.

During *Wife Swap*'s Diary Cam sections, the participants' views and opinions are paramount, whereas the opportunity for that kind of sustained expression from a member of the public would perhaps be diluted in other television formats (or mediated through a presenter/expert). As viewers, we are able to judge or sympathise with individuals based upon their thoughts and emotions as they are delivered to us directly, in close-up. This intimate relationship encourages

the kind of engagement that Moseley identifies in Makeover shows, which 'ask us as viewers to draw upon our repertoire of personal skills, our ability to search faces and discern reactions ... from the smallest details – the twitch of a muscle, an expression in the eye ...' (314). *Wife Swap* invites the viewer to scrutinise the minutiae of human behaviour, drawing upon our ability to read and interpret an individual's speech and gestures as a way of understanding their intellectual and emotional perspectives. This is true not only of the Diary Cam moments, but throughout the show. Of course, the spatial limitations of the domestic environment enforce a natural reliance upon the close-up, but this convention is often used non-arbitrarily to heighten the dramatic intensity of a particular moment, making ordinary events melodramatic. Often this technique is employed to enhance the tension and anger felt between individuals as conflict occurs within the swap, but it can also serve to amplify moments of happiness, relief, reticence, realisation or self-doubt. In a scene from the Jayne/Nicola swap, Jason is made to take his son to Karate for the first time ever as part of Jayne's new household rules. The lesson takes place in a hall large enough for long and medium shots to be used. Yet, as Jason sits and watches his son in the lesson, the camera settles into a series of close-ups, alternating between father and son. This moment is pivotal in the episode. Jason experiences a kind of epiphany, realising his previous failures as a father and experiencing a new relationship with his son. Jason talks about his fear of failure and the importance of parenting, his voice mixed over the sequence, and a soaring guitar melody breaks in to signal his shift in emotional direction. The series of close-ups between father and son allow us to scrutinise Jason's expressions, measuring the impact of the moment on him, searching his face for visible signs of his changing attitude. The choice of close-ups heightens the moment, intensifying the emotions of the scene and making the everyday melodramatic. The editing between shots reinforces the new connection between father and son, particularly in one shot as the son looks over his shoulder and we cut to an image of Jason looking back in his direction; the edited eye-line match creating an exchange of glances and thus articulating their bond. When Jason emerges from the lesson to give a short debrief to camera, his is visibly overwhelmed. The choice of shot, use of voiceover, music and editing in the Karate sequence have brought the viewer very close to understanding what he experiences.

The Karate sequence provides a pertinent illustration of *Wife Swap*'s recurrent tendency to frame subjects in unflinching close-up and linger on faces, glances and gestures, capturing minuscule changes in expression to map internal emotion. This is consistent with *Wife Swap*'s overwhelming focus upon the individual, its rejection of mediating influences such as presenters or experts in favour of a style and approach that aims to give exclusive attention to the citizens it presents. The Karate sequence is highly constructed, with each compositional element such as choice of shot, editing, voiceover and music designed to bring the viewer closer to the individual physical and emotional state. It is perhaps this kind of proximity that prompts the audience's sense of intimacy with the individuals on screen and that caused the chat-room viewers to instinctively attend to their own lives in response to the programme. The fundamental premise of *Wife Swap*, like other examples of the Swap format, provides opportunity for an exceptional concentration upon the individual and, additionally, the programme's compositional style ensures that the citizen remains emphatically the subject of the show, maintaining members of the public as the exclusive focus within the narrative and, ultimately, in our thoughts.

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Notes

1. Paul Hoggart, 'Holiday Showdown failed where Wife Swap triumphed', *The Times* (31 October 2003), 22.
2. Hilary Bell, commissioning editor for documentaries at Channel 4, quoted in Adrian Turpin, 'Why coy Scots turn up noses at Wife Swap', *Sunday Times* (30 November, 2003), 4. In addition to the show's popularity creating demand for new episodes, *Wife Swap* is also, according to Bell, a 'rather cheap series to make,' meaning that new series can be recorded at a relatively low cost and thus, perhaps, with particular regularity.
3. Source: <http://www.rdfmedia.com/reality> (accessed 1 December 2004).
4. Dolan Cummings, 'Introduction', in *Reality TV: How Real is Real?*, ed. Dolan Cummings (Oxford: Hodder & Stoughton, 2002), xii.

5. Su Holmes, “‘All you’ve got to worry about is the task, having a cup of tea, and doing a bit of sunbathing’: Approaching celebrity in Big Brother’, in *Understanding Reality Television*, eds. Su Holmes and Deborah Jermyn (London: Routledge, 2004), 113.

6. Christopher Dunkley, ‘It’s Not New and It’s Not Clever’, in Cummings, 35–47.

7. Bernard Clark, ‘The Box of Tricks’, in Cummings, 2. Clark suggests that technology might have compromised the documentary’s claim for realism: ‘no one suggested that documentary was “real” in the recent sense of the word. The equipment was too heavy, the film too expensive, so everything was staged for the camera.’

8. It is tempting to suggest that a show like *I’m A Celebrity...* is in some way a hybrid, incorporating other show formats into its form and content. However, the notion of a generic hybrid seems to suggest that a pure form of the genre exists somewhere. Certainly, there are common traits that we can easily identify in quiz shows, for example, but often the differences between these programmes are as significant as their similarities to one another. This kind of diversity makes it difficult to identify a ‘quintessential’ quiz show, rendering terms like ‘hybrid’ and ‘pure’ problematic.

9. Rachel Moseley, ‘Makeover takeover on British television’, *Screen* 41.3 (Autumn 2000), 307.

10. Gareth Palmer, ‘The New You: Class and transformation in lifestyle television’, in Holmes and Jermyn, 174.

11. Barbara Creed, ‘Film and Psychoanalysis’, in *The Oxford Guide to Film Studies*, eds. John Hill and Pamela Church Gibson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 81.

12. This episode is featured on the DVD *Wife Swap: The Best of Series 1 & 2* (Channel 4, 2004). Although the repackaging of the show in DVD format changes its viewing context somewhat, the growing number of television shows now appearing on DVD and video at least provides access if one has missed the show when originally broadcast.

13. Source: <http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk?topicid=9&threadid=5405&stamp=031001213506> (accessed 1 December 2004).

14. There is also background music, a standard feature of this section of the programme and one that is often used more definitely to emphasise differences between the two families.